

Friis, John

From: rklein@brandeis.edu
Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2009 3:09 PM
To: Friis, John
Subject: HB6666, Section 5

March 13, 2009

Dear members of the General Assembly,

I am writing in regards to the disturbing news that the Educational Center for the Arts may be forced to close due to two pieces of legislation being considered by the General Assembly. As a graduate of ECA, I can think of no other experience during my public education that helped to shape me more than my time at ECA.

I am currently a freshman at Brandeis University, where I believe my acceptance was greatly influenced by my participation at ECA. ECA gave me a competitive edge over other students in an age in which getting into college has become even more difficult and colleges are looking for activities that set applicants apart from each other. Although I am not currently pursuing the art form I studied at ECA, dance, my experience in the dance department motivated me to join several dance clubs on campus as well as to attend dance performances in nearby Boston. Many of my friends who are graduates of the ECA dance department and who are majoring in dance at their current university or college credit ECA with not only instilling in them a love for dance but for helping them to excel in the dance world.

In addition to aiding in my college application process and acceptance, I gained invaluable knowledge while a student at ECA. ECA opened me up to so many new and different people who I would never have had the opportunity to meet in my small town of Woodbridge. The teachers at ECA, in and outside of the dance department, showed me a side of art that I had never been exposed to and would certainly not have been exposed to at my regular public high school. My dance education showed me the importance of having a global perspective and taught me how to interact with others different from my self, knowledge that I believe set me on the path towards my intended major of International and Global Studies.

Requiring state certification for all teachers would be a gross mistake. The teachers at ECA are of the highest quality and masters in their own fields. Susan Matheke, the head of the dance department, as well as the other instructors bring enthusiasm, dedication, and most importantly, many years of experience. This helps to set them apart from other teachers at other schools. It is not often that your history teacher will be able to give a first hand account of fighting in World War II, but a dance teacher can impart the knowledge that comes from working with established choreographers and companies. Requiring state certification will discourage artists from teaching courses at ECA and providing students with an experience that could not be received at any other public school.

The nature of art is that it opens up the participant to ideas, concepts, individuals, and movements that they would not have the opportunity to relate to during the course of their every day activities. ECA not only teaches it's students how to be better artists, it teaches it's students how to be better people, and in the current day and age, what could be more important?

Sincerely,
Rachel Klein
Educational Center for the Arts Class of 2007